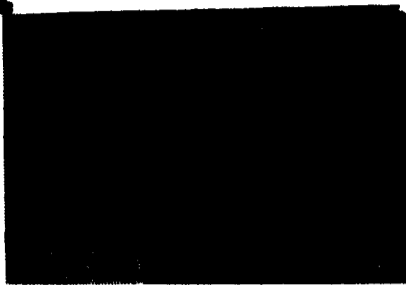


The Coach



We Need Commitment

•Editor's Note: Parts of this column were submitted prior to the Christmas break.

I have a fabulous idea. I think that colleges around the country should offer a course in commitment. Obviously, as in all college course list offerings, my course will be titled. To wit:

Commitment 101 (Four credits) 10:00-11:15 MW

An introduction to behavioral concepts relating the acts of committing to a charge or trust. We will analyze roles, duties, structures, models, and methods employed in agreements and pledges. We will discuss and develop a definition of the word obligation. Attendance mandatory.

What is the Coach talking about? Is he going nuts, you ask? No way, Jose. I'm talking about Danny Ainge of course. Ainge is just another example of the professional athlete who has shown a lack of commitment and obligation where a legal contract is concerned. That's commitment with a capital C. What Ainge has done is a disgrace to professional athletics. He has signed a contract to play baseball for the Toronto Blue Jays. No one forced Ainge to sign with the Blue Jays. No one forced him to play baseball. Does a contract mean anything nowadays?

Ainge is a copout! When his batting average dipped below a robust .187 and his defensive skills began to deteriorate, he began to have second thoughts about playing professional baseball. But Danny signed a legal contract with the Blue Jays. He made a commitment and supposedly had an obligation to fulfill his contract. Guess what? After being drafted by the Boston Celtics after the finish of the 1981 baseball season, Ainge told the Jays that he wasn't interested in playing baseball anymore. It's obvious to me that Ainge has tried to coast on his natural talent alone. He has given up. He quit!

Danny Ainge has spent the huge signing bonus that he received from the Toronto Blue Jays. Now he will spend an even larger bonus given to him for signing with the Celtics. What a lucky boy. Ainge will probably become a star in the N.B.A. Maybe play ten years. Maybe even be an All-Star. But, he will lose in the long run. Everyone will lose in the long run. Big deal, the Blue Jays get one million bucks in compensation from the Celtics for signing Ainge. Probably more than he is worth. But, that's not the point. The point is that Danny Ainge made a commitment and he has backed out of it. He made a legal contract to play for the Blue Jays. He has broken it, and with that he has lost a lot of respect. I wonder if he knows what commitment is? I wonder if he knows what obligation is? I wonder if they teach that at Brigham Young University?

Two More Jerks

The first of the pair is Marques Johnson. He is another example of an All America, NBA All-Star who is showing the fans around the United States his lack of commitment. He wants his contract renegotiated. He wants more money. Even though he has signed a contract that is good for the next three years. Johnson isn't going to play until the Milwaukee Bucks meet his demands. I hope they refuse to meet his demands. Let him get old and gray waiting for his renegotiated contract.

The other jerk goes by the same last name as Marques. Yes sports fans, I'm talking about none other than the Magic Man, Magic Johnson. You know him, he's the 22-year-old who orders his boss to fire his coach. I guess you can do that when you have a 25-year, \$25 million contract. How is a coach supposed to coach when his players make 30 times what he makes? Johnson has a lot of class, all low. You would never hear Dr. J, Larry Bird, or Kareem do that.

Note: After three minutes in a game against Dallas last week, Johnson demanded and received a new game ball. Mavericks' coach Dick Motta leaped off the bench and shouted for all Texas to hear, "He's supposed to get rid of coaches, not basketballs!"

P.S.U. 48 Pitt 14 Unbelievable!

I hope all of the "Fire Paterno" fans will shut up for a while. He always has been an exciting offensive coach. Ha, ha, ha. If I were a Penn State football fan I'd feel like a sucker. Oh no, the Coach is picking on Paterno again. Think about it, why could Penn State field an offense like that against Pitt and not against Miami or Alabama? PSU combined a good ground attack with a totally surprising passing attack to defeat Pitt. Why not earlier? Why not undefeated or only one loss? State should have been in the running for number one this year but they weren't. Too bad, State fans.

Another Non-Sport

What kind of human being would trap through the woods, just waiting for the chance to gun down a defenseless animal? Hunting is not a sport. No way! Oh, the hunters like to think that they are providing mankind with a service, but they're not. Not really. However, what is the first statement a hunter will make in defense of his so-called sport? "If we don't hunt, many animals will starve to death during the cold winter. We need to kill them," say the hunters with blood dripping from their hands. Are hunters trying to prove their manhood by hunting? No doubt about it. Why don't they participate in target shooting at local gun clubs? Hell no! It's more fun to kill! I can't see any sport being a sport when you need to kill to make it one. Happy Hunting.

To the Coach-

How can you possibly draw up a basketball Top Ten without including the Hoosiers of Indiana?! They are, after all, the NCAA champs, and they have a lot of players back. I gave Bobby Knight your number; you'll probably be getting a call.

Dr. Basketball Bronner

Dear Dr. B-Ball Bronner,

Thanks for the threat, but Coach Knight and I have already met. You'll be glad to know that he reads my column, too. Without a doubt Coach Knight is the best Coach in the country. I believe that he could be a successful coach in any sport. He is my most favorite coach of them all. He epitomizes what a great coach really is, and what many coaches across the country lack. They lack the ability to teach. The greatest coaches have always been excellent teachers, and Bobby Knight is no exception.

However, Dr. B, this year's Indiana team will lose 7-10 games [minimum]. Indiana returns only two starters from last year's team, Randy Wittman [10.4 ppg] and Ted Kitchel [9.2 ppg]. Indiana plays an extremely difficult schedule which could hurt them come poll time. However, they will be invited to the NCAA tourney, and if their freshmen come on strong could surprise a lot of people.

Hope to hear from you again.

Dear Coach,

I love your column. It's a welcome relief from the usual humdrum sports articles one constantly reads.

I'd personally like to congratulate Penn State on their tremendous victory over Notre Dame. That's the closest thing to winning a national championship that Penn State will ever experience. Watch out Lions, next year when the Irish get it together you'll be lucky to keep the score less than: N.D. 31, PSU10.

Coach, I have a question for you. Why aren't you with Sports Illustrated or The Sporting News? You're definitely the best.

Gene McGovern
READER Music Critic

Dear Clean Gene,

What can I say? It's just a pleasure to receive a letter from an intelligent, literate, and personable guy. I thank you for your compliments. I feel sorry for Gerry Faust. He must be taking quite a bit of heat from Notre Dame fans across the country. Don't give up the faith, Clean Gene. N.D. will be back.

I've got one for you: Name the three other members in the Jeff Beck Truth Album. You see, I know my music too!

Coach,

Congratulations on your ability to side-step an issue. It's people like you who are destroying USAC. Instead of defending your original position, you merely qualified it. Let me attempt to put you on the right track (pun intended).

In your original slander on race car drivers, you lumped them all into one category. Now, in your response to my gripe, you distinguish between professionals and amateurs. I agree. Formula One racers are athletes, as are NASCAR, ARTGO, WoO, USAC, SCCA, and NHRA drivers, to name a few. By the way, the NHRA is one of the organizations of drag racing drivers, and they too have to endure high heat and hard-to-control cars.

I also agree that weekend warriors, like myself, do not stay in that kind of shape. But then again, do intramural baseball or football players? Or how about the guys who play basketball in the gym every once in a while? Most of them stick with the 12-ounce curls, like me. Yet, if you are to be consistent, you'd have to admit that no baseball, football, or basketball players, including professionals, are athletes playing a true sport--just because some people who play them don't stay in top condition.

Of course, we all know that that's bull. You probably didn't say what you really meant. But if you're going to have an official column, you'd better mean exactly what you print, and have facts rather than emotions, to back yourself up.

Please don't sign your name to your column--I don't want to know who's helping to lower the integrity of this paper. Its integrity is already low enough when its editors have to take cheap shots at engineers, while they have one on their staff.

G. Pellett

Gary,

Yawn. This is really getting boring. Face the facts, car racing is not a sport! It doesn't take much to become a driver of a racing car. Hell, when I was 18, I raced a modified stock car twice. No big deal. Didn't take any skill. We do agree on one thing though: that the real athletes are the Formula One drivers. Not like those other phonies who drive in a circle. It takes only a minimal amount of skill to hold the pedal to the floor and drive like hell in a circle. And those funny cars and fuel dragsters are just as ridiculous. Push the pedal to the metal and hold on for dear life. Oh, and Gary, all those racing organizations that you mention in your letter do not give credibility to car racing.

Gary, next time you write, please write about a real sport. Okay?

Coach's Note

It was a pleasure to meet you, Kevin and Darrell. No matter what anyone says, I think you guys have some brains. I'll look forward to seeing you again; maybe this time you'll know it's me.

COACH

If you'd like to say something to the Coach, drop him a line at the C.C. READER Office.